

SUBJECT: 2003 Rural Telecommunications Symposia

TO: All RUS Electric and Telecommunications Borrowers and Consulting Engineers

FROM: ROBERTA D. PURCELL
Assistant Administrator
Telecommunications Program

We are pleased to announce the 2003 Rural Telecommunications Symposia. The symposia will be held in Dallas, Texas, on April 15 through 17, and in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on May 13 through 15.

Headlining this year's agenda will be the new Rural Broadband Loan Program authorized in the 2002 Farm Bill. This program was announced by Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman on January 29, and in this first year it will make available \$1.455 Billion in loans and loan guarantees for rural broadband systems. Presentations on the Broadband Program will include guidelines for applying for loans and loan guarantees, discussions of the technologies that can provide rural broadband service, and presentations on Internet-related issues such as privacy and copyright protection.

Other topics that will be covered this year will be:

- A progress report on the development of the new Local Television Loan Guarantee Program. This program authorizes RUS to issue loan guarantees to enable rural residents to receive local television signals. The Local Television Program was created to strengthen rural communities by connecting them to the broadcasters in their areas
- The impact of Homeland Security on rural telecommunications systems and the RUS
- Technical developments in the rural telecommunications industry
- Updates on the Telecommunications Loan Programs, including introduction of new streamlined loan application and approval processes
- A report on developments in rural mobile wireless telephony. The RUS Telecommunications Program now finances rural cellular and PCS systems, and follows technical and market developments affecting rural carriers
- Updates on other rural programs administered by RUS, including the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program
- A report on how the Federal Government's eGov Initiative will make your access to RUS more convenient

The first Symposium will be held at the Fairmont Hotel in Dallas, Texas. We have negotiated a special group rate of \$129 for single or double occupancy rooms, plus tax. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel reservation department at 214-720-5290, or 1-800-441-1414. To receive the special rate, callers should identify themselves as attending the **Rural Telecommunications Symposium**. The deadline for reservations to receive the group rate is March 14, 2003.

The second Symposium will be held at the Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel. We have negotiated a special group rate of \$119 for single, double or triple occupancy rooms throughout the period from Saturday, May 10 through Thursday, May 15. Reservations may be made by calling the Minneapolis Marriott at 612-349-4000 or 1-800-228-9290, or at the hotel's website at www.marriott.com. Callers should specify the **RUS Rural Telecommunications Symposium** to receive the special rates. Those registering on-line should use the following group code: **RUSRUSA**

We urge you to make your hotel reservations at the earliest possible date because of the high level of interest the new broadband loan program is generating.

We are enclosing a summary of meeting dates and hotel information. We have established a notice of this meeting on our website at www.usda.gov/rus/telecom where we will post and update the meeting agenda.

Each attendee will receive handout material and supporting information prepared by the speakers. Continental breakfast will be served each morning of the symposium and during breaks, beverages and snacks will be provided. To cover catering and printing costs, RUS has set a registration fee of \$175 per attendee. Additional copies of the handout materials may be reserved for \$30 each and picked up at the symposium or shipped directly to the registrant after the first Symposium.

Please use the enclosed form for meeting registration. We have set registration deadlines of March 28 for the Dallas Symposium and April 25 for the Minneapolis Symposium. Please register early because if registration greatly exceeds our expectations, we may have to accept later registrations on a first come, first served basis.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2003 Rural Telecommunications Symposia.

Enclosures

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**2003 Rural Telecommunications
Symposia Hotel Information**

Dallas Symposium

April 15-17, 2003

The Fairmont Hotel – Dallas
1717 North Akard Street
Dallas, TX 75201

\$129 plus tax, single or double

For reservations, phone:
214-720-5290
1-800-441-1414
and mention: “Rural Telecommunications Symposium”

Minneapolis Symposium

May 13-15, 2003

Minneapolis Marriott City Center Hotel
30 South 7th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402

\$119 plus tax, single to quadruple

For reservations, phone:
612-349-4000
1-800-228-9290
and mention: “Rural Utilities Service – 2003 Rural Telecommunications Symposium”

Reservations online:
www.marriott.com
Online group code: RUSRUSA

RUS Rural Telecommunications Symposia REGISTRATION FORM

Please enter the requested information and submit
to RUS by **March 28 (Dallas) or April 25 (Minneapolis).**

Dallas April 15-17	Minneapolis May 13-15	Name and Title of Attendee (will be on registration badge)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name
		Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name
		Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name
		Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Name
		Title

Organization Name	Address

Telephone Number	FAX Number

FEES (each attendee receives one symposium notebook)

_____ Number of persons attending symposium at **\$175** \$ _____

_____ Additional symposium notebooks at **\$30** \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Make checks (no cash, please) payable to: **REA ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

Send Registration Form and check to:

Rural Utilities Service
STOP 1550
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington DC 20250-1550